

The Benefits of Formal Mutual Aid Agreements in Lancaster County:

Executive Development

By: Timothy M. Gregg

Lancaster Bureau of Fire

Lancaster, Pennsylvania

An applied research project submitted to the National Fire Academy as part of the Executive

Fire Officer Program

February 2007

Certification Statement

I hereby certify that this paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions, or writings of another.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

## Abstract

The Lancaster Fire Department has traditionally exchanged mutual aid with its neighboring communities on an informal basis. The problem is that informal mutual aid agreements have caused confusion between departments and reduced efficiency in emergency response capabilities. The purpose of this applied research project was to determine if formal mutual aid agreements would improve emergency response and coordination throughout Lancaster County.

The descriptive research method was used to evaluate the current form of mutual aid agreements in use in Lancaster County, and the trends at the state and federal level. The following questions concerning mutual aid agreements were explored: What are the opinions of Local Fire Chiefs? How do other disciplines address mutual aid? Would formal agreements improve response? What form of agreements would be compatible with intra-state and inter-state agreements?

The original research for this project included a 27question survey (addendum A) that was mailed to 82 (N=82) Lancaster County Fire Chiefs. Additionally, personal interviews with local public safety officials were also conducted to learn about the history, to determine opinions, and to evaluate current mutual aid practices. Based on the results of the survey and personal interviews, participants indicated that although opinions vary throughout the county, the suburban chiefs prefer formal mutual aid agreements.

Based on these findings, it was recommended that the Lancaster Fire Department pursue formal agreements with Lancaster Township, Manheim Township, and Lafayette Fire Departments. Future readers should investigate the reasons why rural fire departments appear to be resistant to formal mutual aid agreements.

## Table of Contents

Certification Statement.....	2
Abstract.....	3
Table of Contents.....	4
Introduction.....	5
Background and Significance.....	6
Literature Review.....	8
Procedures.....	19
Results.....	20
Discussion.....	29
Recommendations.....	33
Reference List.....	35

## Appendices

Appendix A: Questionnaire Cover Letter.....	37
Appendix B: Lancaster County Fire Chiefs Questionnaire.....	38
Appendix C: Interview Questions.....	43

## The Benefits of Formal Mutual Aid Agreements in Lancaster County

### Introduction

The City of Lancaster Pennsylvania is a third class city located in south central Pennsylvania, the area is commonly known as “Amish country”. The city has had a career fire department for the past 125 years with 89 members, in three fire stations and a fire headquarters, serving a population of 55,000 people within a seven square mile area. The City of Lancaster is the county seat of Lancaster County. The remainder of the county is protected by 82 volunteer fire companies that serve more than 450,000 citizens.

Not many fire departments can afford to maintain a level of staffing that can manage large scale emergencies by themselves. Fire departments across the United States have traditionally rendered assistance to their neighbors in times of need, and many mutual aid agreements have been informal and based on a handshake. Today, many fire departments are reevaluating their agreements because of the increasing legal and insurance issues, as well as the high costs of providing fire protection.

Currently, the Lancaster Fire Department (LFD) shares emergency services resources with the surrounding volunteer fire departments but has no formalized written agreements in place. The problem is that informal mutual aid agreements that do exist are causing confusion as to the roles and responsibilities of the LFD when assisting, or receiving assistance from their neighbors.

The purpose of this study is to determine if formal mutual aid agreements would improve fire service coordination and response throughout Lancaster County. This study will attempt to gauge the attitudes of county fire chiefs as they relate to mutual aid and

formal mutual aid agreements, and determine if the LFD should develop formal agreements with neighboring departments.

The descriptive research method will be used in this project. The research will attempt to determine what forms of mutual aid are being used in Lancaster County at this time, and what agreements are being adopted at the state and federal levels. This project will also describe how other public safety disciplines address mutual aid practices.

The following questions will be explored during this research project: What are the opinions of Lancaster County Fire Chiefs concerning formal mutual aid agreements? How do other public safety disciplines address mutual aid response? How would formal mutual aid agreements improve emergency response in Lancaster County? What form of mutual aid agreements would be compatible with current interstate (state to state) and intrastate (within a state) mutual aid agreements?

### Background and Significance

The Lancaster Fire Department is the only career fire department in Lancaster County. Our closest neighbors include: Lancaster Township Fire Department to the west, Lafayette Fire Company to the east, Willow Street Fire Company to the south, and Eden and Southern Manheim Township Fire Companies to the North. The L.F.D. is currently dispatched automatically to first alarm fire calls in the southern areas of Manheim Township, and the northern part of Willow Street's response areas that are close to the City of Lancaster. We are dispatched automatically to second alarm and greater calls in Lancaster Township. No surrounding volunteer fire companies are automatically dispatched into the city because of our union contract limitations.

The five surrounding fire companies and the LFD have always participated in mutual aid, but have never formalized our agreements in writing. Informal agreements have caused confusion and safety issues when the LFD responds outside of our jurisdiction. Our departments do not train together, we have inconsistent standard operating procedures, and we are unfamiliar with other departments' accountability systems.

The LFD is interested in conducting joint training with our neighboring departments and enhancing our regional response capabilities. In 2005, we formed a partnership with the Lancaster County Hazardous Materials Team that utilizes LFD hazardous materials technicians throughout the county. We have also joined the Central Pennsylvania Foam Task Force and we respond to flammable liquid incidents with three other area fire departments. This type of functional mutual aid could be used with high-angle rescue, confined space rescue, and many other specialties.

As we have learned from recent natural disasters and terrorist incidents, a fire department may be asked to deploy staff to other parts of the state, or even other regions of the country. With the advent of the National Incident Management System and the regional terrorism task force systems, there is a greater chance of a regional deployment. Fire departments must know their rights and responsibilities while responding outside of their jurisdiction in order to minimize the risk of liability and other legal issues.

This project directly ties into the Executive Development course by its emphasis on teams and teamwork. When a department responds outside of its jurisdiction, members must be prepared to work with total strangers in difficult circumstances, and answer to another jurisdiction's leadership. Mutual aid agreements are linked to the United States Fire

Administration's operational objectives of helping communities develop comprehensive all hazard risk reduction plans.

### Literature Review

In recent years, the American fire service has responded to a growing variety of emergencies that range from minor fires and service calls, acts of terrorism, to natural disasters like hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The national call volume has been steadily increasing to about 20,000,000 per year (Simpson, Davidson 2006); at the same time staffing levels and fire department budgets have been decreasing. Many municipalities have responded to the increasing call volume by relying on shared resources and mutual aid from their neighbors. As stated by Smith (2006, ¶1), "How many fire departments can truly say that they are able to handle every emergency by themselves. The news brings reports of blizzards, floods, mudslides and other natural disasters that deplete resources rapidly and for prolonged periods. And let's not forget terrorism."

Hawkins, McClees (1988) explained that mutual aid may take the form of an agreement between two municipalities where each department will provide assistance when requested, or an automatic aid agreement where the dispatcher will send the nearest available resource. One benefit of automatic aid is that teamwork and efficiency may be improved because of frequent dual responses. Some small communities that are unable to provide adequate fire protection contract with a larger municipality. This form of agreement is called outside aid and may be used for large scale emergencies or even the initial response.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) recommends that a fire department should have a written mutual aid agreement that addresses liability for injuries, cost of service, authority to respond, equipment and staffing, and the use of the incident command



system. All member departments in the agreement shall provide standardized training to provide compatible operations (NFPA, 2000).

Mutual aid response does have its shortcomings which are reflected in the following statement by J. Granito (1997):

Mutual aid agreements do not reduce the responsibility of each jurisdiction to maintain adequate facilities to handle normal fire protection needs. It also must be assumed that teamwork and tactical efficiency at a fire will be somewhat less than that expected of equal units from the same department under a unified command. (pp.10-35).

J. Granito found that mutual aid between a large municipality and its smaller neighbors is often not truly reciprocal. The smaller jurisdiction may become dependent on these services, which may cause policymakers to be reluctant to entering into mutual aid agreements. As Granito said, “To achieve true reciprocity, however, it is necessary to avoid what is sometimes called the ‘Robin Hood Syndrome’” (Hawkins, McClees, 1988, p.343).

With the advent of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Intrastate and Interstate mutual aid agreements, many municipalities are considering formalizing their mutual aid agreements into written documents. As Jenaway (2006) states, “ Mutual aid agreements force risk assessment, pre-emergency planning, and identification of potentially needed resources to assure you can provide a timely, quality response to an emergency”(p.3). Further, Simpson and Davison (2006) state that:

The cultural shift, then, must be to formalize these concepts into the comprehensive and exercised mutual aid systems that provide an effective and coordinated response in an all-hazards environment. In doing so, the fire service is not only preparing for

responding to large-scale or concurrent events, but will find some assistance in addressing budget shortfalls and initiating concepts of interoperability” (p.2).

In order for successful large-scale mutual aid plans to be effective, commonly accepted fire department procedures must be reflected in their plan. This will help the routine mutual aid efforts transition more easily into a multi-jurisdictional large-scale response (Paulsgrove, 1997). The use of the incident command system is one of the most commonly used procedures in the fire service in both large-scale and routine emergencies. When speaking about large-scale events, Smith (2006) states, “The process of command at this level is more about relationships and conversations than about whose court the ball is in” (p.1). When a mutual aid plan is exercised at the local level, command personnel will develop relationships that will be beneficial in a large-scale disaster.

Lancaster County fire service leaders realized a need for improved foam capabilities and therefore developed the Lancaster County Foam Taskforce. The Taskforce is comprised of four departments with shared resources and uniform standard operating procedures. However, the taskforce does not have a written mutual aid agreement. This partnership is primarily funded by the member departments, but does also receive funding through the Department of Homeland Security. The four member departments have responded to flammable liquid incidents throughout Lancaster and York Counties. Bachman (2006), found that by pooling resources, several jurisdictions can develop highly capable specialty units that no one department could afford to operate independently.

The municipal fire service is not the only public safety discipline to engage in mutual aid agreements. In New Jersey, MAC-SICS (Mutual-Aid Cooperative-State Industrial Chiefs) agreement was signed in 2002. The agreement partners industries and the municipal

fire service to ensure that equipment, communications, and strategies are interoperable. The plan was meant to build on current practices and not to reinvent the wheel. Specialized resources such as foam equipment are shared between member industries and municipal fire departments (Kanterman, 2005).

Local governments may choose to form functional regional response teams. Members with specialized training in hazardous materials response, technical rescue, special weapons and tactics, decontamination teams, and other disciplines may be formed to respond throughout a region. The regional task force concept prevents a municipality from having to carry the full burden of providing a specialty service. It is essential that written agreements clarify roles and responsibilities of the individual members of a regional task force, and are consistent with state law (Cohn, 2005).

Fire department administrators have assisted other municipal departments in developing written mutual aid agreements. Public works departments often share heavy equipment and materials during storms, or other emergencies, and may benefit from formal planning and mutual aid agreements. Law enforcement may also benefit from forming mutual aid plans with neighboring jurisdictions. Jurisdictional issues may have to be resolved, but a mutual aid agreement may allow officers to pursue suspects into other jurisdictions and operate with neighboring departments in apprehending criminals. Many military installations form mutual aid agreements with their civilian counterparts and routinely respond outside government property (Hawkins, McClees, 1988).

The International Association of Fire Chiefs is developing several programs that will help the fire service implement the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and develop a national emergency management system. The first program is the Intrastate

Mutual Aid System (IMAS). The IMAS began with ten pilot states that were designated to develop intrastate (within a state) written mutual aid plans. The second program is the interstate (between states) Mutual Aid System Task Force (MASTF). The goal of the task force is to coordinate the movement of fire resources across state boundaries (Metcalf, 2006, December).

The Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) was developed by the National Emergency Management Association to provide state to state disaster response agreements. EMAC is a standardized system for requesting and dispatching mutual aid resources including all 48 of the continental states. The EMAC enables a state to request mutual aid after the governor declares a disaster or emergency, and during large scale exercises. This requirement may limit the operational use of mutual aid to only the largest incidents (Cohn, 2005).

One important feature of the EMAC is the ability to receive reimbursement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency public assistance program. A jurisdiction that has requested mutual aid may be reimbursed for costs that were incurred if they were actually charged by the jurisdiction that provided mutual aid. This is an important feature because intrastate mutual aid agreements normally do not address reimbursement if member jurisdiction does not normally charge for expenses (Cohn, 2005).

Member states should be cognizant of the fact that self deployed agencies or individuals will not be protected under the EMAC agreements. Resources that were not dispatched under the compact may experience difficulties on the emergency scene by not receiving logistical support, recognition of certifications, or immunity from lawsuits (NEMA, 2006).

The EMAC was tested during the 2005 gulf coast hurricane season with hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Officials with the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA) felt that EMAC and its leadership were effective in one of the country's largest disasters. It was determined in an after action report that EMAC procedures helped assisting agencies integrate smoothly with local responders. States with organized intrastate agreements were able to respond to requests quickly and commit resources to EMAC assignments, states with no formal agreements had trouble finding resources and relocating them (NEMA, 2006).

There were several important recommendations that came from the after action report from the hurricane response. The National Emergency Management Association recommends that government agencies at all levels train, exercise, and implement the NIMS. Most of the agencies that responded to the Gulf Coast were proficient in the use of an incident command system, but many were not. Some responders were not familiar with any form of incident command system and proved to be dysfunctional on the scene. All responders should receive NIMS refresher training and informational literature prior to being deployed to a disaster (NEMA, 2006).

NIMS has been instrumental in incorporating mutual aid and incident command systems, into one structure that will facilitate multi-jurisdictional response. NIMS considers the mutual aid system as an indispensable tool for the rapid response and mitigation of disasters. The NIMS Integration Center and the Federal Emergency Management Association see the IMAS as a crucial step in implementing NIMS into state emergency planning (Simpson, Davidson, 2006).

In 2004, NEMA published the Model Intrastate Mutual Aid Legislation (Model Legislation). This legislation was designed to incorporate NIMS into statewide mutual aid

agreements. This legislation had the effect of limiting operational mutual aid between jurisdictions because it is based on EMAC. This compact may only be used when a governor of a requesting state declares a disaster or large scale exercise, and not during routine mutual aid (Cohn, 2005).

The NIMS integration center and the International Association of Fire Chiefs have partnered to form the IMAS and plan to implement the system in two phases. Phase one involves ten technical experts working with ten pilot states to develop written state-wide mutual aid plans that focus on credentialing, resource typing, and inventorying and are based on established best practices already in place. Director David Paulison (2006, Chief, ¶2) said, “An Intrastate mutual aid network will help the fire service be better prepared to respond to large-scale or concurrent events; it will also help us address interoperability of various resources before an actual event.” Paulison was serving as the acting Federal Emergency Management Director at this time.

In phase two, the pilot states will compare best practices and in a collaborative effort, develop statewide mutual aid plans that can be used in all states. The goal of IMAS is to not reinvent any wheels, but to build on best practices in states that already had effective mutual aid agreements. California, Florida, Ohio, and Illinois were identified as benchmark states (Metcalf, 2006).

Louisiana was invited to participate in the IMAS pilot program. Prior to Hurricane Katrina, the fire service was not even included in the State’s emergency response plan. The lack of planning and coordination hurt emergency operations especially when entire fire departments were wiped out. After participating in the IMAS planning process, Ken Pearson of the Louisiana Fire Chief Association felt that the value of the planning sessions was the

opportunity to meet the people that you will be working with during an emergency. Pearson (2006, ¶16) indicated that, “Projects like IMAS will not stop hurricanes, earthquakes, wildfires, or any other disasters from occurring however, these agreements will make the response faster, safer and organized.”

Metcalf (2006, April) found that the International Association of Fire Chiefs is in support of the interstate (MASTF) mutual aid system, and the organization hopes to have a model in place by the fall of 2006. Routine operational mutual aid is a relatively simple process, but moving personnel and equipment to other regions of the country requires a great deal of logistics. Metcalf (2006, December), also found that the following components should be included in the plan to provide for a coordinated response: common terminology, resource typing, inventory system, dispatching procedures, logistical support, legal issues, compensation, documentation, and system management.

Common terminology is important in a mutual aid agreement. In some regions a tanker is a piece of fire apparatus, and in other areas a tanker is an aircraft used for wildland firefighting. Resource typing also clarifies terminology. A request for an engine for example, must specify if the engine should be equipped for structural firefighting, or wildland firefighting. Personnel capabilities must also have clear definitions and descriptions, and a credentialing system must be in place to ensure that personnel are trained and equipped to complete the mission. An agreement on common terminology and definitions will be an important component of the MASTF system (Metcalf, 2006, April).

States must have a consistent method of requesting and dispatching aid. There are several models in use throughout the country. The most prevalent method is the EMAC system that is operated by the federal government. There are some effective interstate

agreements also. The MASTF system is attempting to identify an effective method while reducing the limitations of the EMAC system (Metcalf, 2006 December).

One of the major problems experienced with the hurricane Katrina response was the lack of logistical support. Base camps were not well organized and food and water were in short supply (Metcalf, 2006 month). One outcome of the MASTF agreement will be improved logistical support en route to and on the scene of a disaster. Base camps will have food and water, medical support, shower facilities, and fuel for equipment. As Metcalf (2006, April) states, “It’s not enough just to get them there; we must also take care of them” (p.137).

Some other components that will be included in MASTF will be legal issues; a legal foundation and protection from liability will be built into the system. Workers’ compensation responsibilities will be pre-determined, and reimbursement protocol will be documented. Incident documentation and accountability of human and material resources will be provided by completing the incident forms being used in the NIMS system (Metcalf, 2006 December).

The IMAS guide to planning identifies several considerations for the planning process: the fire service should be the lead agency in emergency planning and response, and rapid mobilization should be measured in hours rather than days. There must be statewide understanding that self-dispatch must be eliminated, and the plan must be formulated so that it integrates with the state EMAC plan and standard operating procedures to ensure a coordinated escalation of disaster response. The agreement should have an opt-out clause so that all municipalities are part of the plan from the point that it is adopted, and a reimbursement provision should be included. A providing agency should maintain 80% of



their resources at home and send no more than 20% to the requesting jurisdiction, and the plan should be NIMS compliant (IMAS, 2006).

The Northern Virginia Emergency Service Mutual Response Agreement (NOVA) is an example of an effective and successful agreement. Members of the agreement are the cities of Alexandria and Fairfax, counties of Arlington and Fairfax, and the Army base at Fort Belvoir. The NOVA contains an automatic aid agreement that dispatches the closest and most appropriate resource without regard to jurisdictional boundaries. All parties participate in the development of standard operating procedures that cover all aspects of emergency response from dispatch procedures, communication protocol, incident command, and tactical operations. Member parties agree that they will not charge each other for normal emergency response unless the requesting jurisdiction bills, and receives payment from the party that was responsible for the emergency. Members also agree to waive all claims against the other parties for liability incurred outside of their jurisdiction (Cohn, 2005).

A national credentialing system is an important feature of a mutual aid system, and is a critical component of NIMS, and builds on the EMAC compact. Credentialing ensures qualifications and credentials of emergency responders and facilitates their deployment. The credentialing system will verify a minimum level of training that is current and consistent. It will also measure the physical fitness level, experience, and familiarity with the incident command system. However, this system will not ensure automatic access to the disaster scene. Responders will be permitted on the scene only if requested, and self-dispatched and unqualified responders may be denied access without the proper credentials (NIMS, 2005).

In most states, workers are protected by workers' compensation statutes when injured on the job. With this automatic protection the worker and their family relinquishes the right

to bring suit against the employer. A key component of a mutual aid agreement is the determination of who will be responsible for workers' compensation claims, the responding, or requesting jurisdiction. The agreement should clarify if the employee is to be considered a special employee, or a borrowed servant in the requesting jurisdiction. In the past, courts have decided that the mutual aid agreement demonstrates that the responder is an employee of the assisting agency, and not a special employee of the requesting jurisdiction (Cohn, 2005).

The creation of intrastate and interstate mutual aid agreements will ensure that a department or individual crew will be part of a large system that may respond well outside of their jurisdiction. Through resource typing and credentialing, incident commanders will have a clear idea of your level of training and equipment that your department will provide. Once the crew arrives on the scene of a disaster they will be taken care of, and the responding jurisdiction will be reimbursed for costs (Metcalf, 2006 April).

The literature that has been reviewed for this project has made it clear that mutual aid agreements should be formalized and committed to in writing. A formal agreement may solve the problem of confusion between departments when participating in mutual aid, and clarify the roles of members while they are operating in another jurisdiction. This project will be influenced by the realization that efforts are underway at the state and national level to organize response efforts. While local mutual aid agreements will be focused on more routine day-to-day response, a well written local agreement will set the stage for a more organized regional response.

## Procedures

The original research procedures for this project include a 27 question survey (Addendum A) and seven personal interviews. The survey was mailed to a population of 82 (N=82) Fire Chiefs in Lancaster County. The reason that these individuals were chosen for the study is that they are the decision-makers in the county fire service. The survey was designed to obtain information on services provided by each department, the level of dependency on mutual aid, and opinions on formal mutual aid agreements.

There are limitations to the study. The Fire Chiefs that are included in the study are the decision makers for their fire department, but are not necessarily authorized to speak for their municipality. Many Lancaster County fire departments are self supported incorporated organizations that may not share the same opinions of mutual aid with public officials, or even other fire departments within the same municipality.

Questions one through four were designed to categorize departments by size and population of their jurisdiction. However, questions five and six determine the services provided and identify any specialized services. Whereas, questions 7 through 14 explore reliance on mutual aid and specialty services provided. Questions 15 through 19 focused on joint training that ensures equipment and accountability system interoperability, and strategic planning efforts. While question 20 identifies the form of mutual aid agreements in use, informal, formal, or other.

Questions 21 through 24 are intended for departments with no formal mutual aid agreements. The questions measure the satisfaction with informal agreements and whether formal agreements would be beneficial? If formal agreements are beneficial, would regional or individual agreements be preferable? Questions 25 through 27 are for departments with formal agreements. These questions determine if the agreement is individual or regional and

whether the agreement has been beneficial. Question 26 asks for specific topics that are addressed in the agreement. The survey consists of six multiple choice questions, 17 questions that are based on a Likert scale and 4 questions are fill-in the blank.

As part of the original research, five fire chiefs from the surrounding fire departments were interviewed to gauge their interest in formal mutual aid agreements. Each interview was approximately one hour in length, and covered the history of mutual aid in the county and the level of satisfaction with the informal agreements that are in place. We discussed equipment operability and standard operating procedures. We also explored ways to improve our joint training programs. These five chiefs were chosen to be interviewed because they represent the five departments that the LFD shares mutual aid with. If the LFD develops written agreements, it would begin with these five departments.

I also interviewed the Chief of Police within Lancaster, the Operations Director of the Lancaster Emergency Medical Services Association, and John Leas, a former Air Force firefighter in an effort to determine what mutual aid practices are in use in other public safety disciplines. All of the above interviews were directed by a script of questions, (Appendix B).

## Results

The original research for this project was conducted in two parts. The first part was a 27 question survey that was sent to 82 (N=82) Lancaster County Fire Chiefs. The purpose of the survey was to determine mutual aid practices, and opinions regarding mutual aid agreements in Lancaster County. The second part of the original research was personal interviews with 5 fire chiefs, one E.M.S. official, one police chief, and a retired military officer.

The survey was sent to 82 (N=82) fire chiefs with a cover letter explaining the purpose of the project. Thirty-four (n=34) completed surveys were returned as the sample size. The first section of the survey; questions one through six were meant to capture demographic data such as, the size of the department, population of the jurisdiction, and services provided. The balance of the survey questions captured the departments' level of participation in mutual aid agreements, the type of agreements, along with the specific benefits of the agreements.

Of the 91% of the respondents, 59% indicated that the population of their jurisdiction had less than 10,000 citizens, 29% indicated that they had 10,000-20,000 citizens, and 3% recognized a population of 20,000-30,000. The above information indicates that most of the departments that participated in the survey are small townships, or boroughs that protect suburban, or rural jurisdictions. All of the departments surveyed are volunteer fire departments.

Eighty-two percent of the respondents indicated that their department provides assistance to their neighbors often, 18% sometimes, and none of the departments have not provided assistance to their neighbors. Of the 97% of respondents, 68% indicated that they often receive assistance from other departments, 29% sometimes receive assistance, and none of the respondents indicated that they never receive assistance. These results indicate that Lancaster County fire departments rely heavily on mutual aid.

Questions 16, 17, and 18, identify concepts that should be included in a local agreement; 79% of respondents indicated that they utilize NIMS on every incident. With that, 94% acknowledge that they utilize an accountability system that is compatible with neighboring systems. However, 6% of respondents indicated that their systems were not

compatible with their neighbors. While evaluating the interoperability of communications and firefighting equipment, only 47% agree that it was compatible. The use of NIMS, compatible accountability systems, and interoperable communications are vital components of a formal agreement.

In determining the number of departments which utilize formal mutual aid agreements, 79% indicated that they have informal agreements, 3% have formal agreements in place, and 15% acknowledge that no written agreements were in place. When asked if they felt that written mutual aid agreements would be beneficial to their department, only 15% felt that they would not be beneficial. In evaluating the preferred type of mutual aid agreements, 21% of respondents favored regional agreements, 32% shared a preference for individual agreements. These results demonstrate that there are no significant findings in favor of formal agreements.

The second part of the original research for this project was personal interviews with five fire chiefs whose jurisdictions surround the city of Lancaster. The purpose of the interviews were to learn more about the history of mutual aid in Lancaster County to evaluate the present mutual aid efforts in place to determine if our equipment is interoperable, and to gauge opinions on written mutual aid agreements between the City of Lancaster and their municipalities.

The first interview was with Chief Reese of the Willow Street Fire Company. Lancaster and Willow Street fire departments have enjoyed a cooperative and informal mutual aid agreement for years with virtually no problems developing. There is a joint automatic response in the Lancaster County Central Park, and a City ladder truck is automatically dispatched in Willow Street's northern running district. The City has requested

the Willow Street ladder truck for use at general alarm fires and for standby at the stations when the city is committed at large scale events. Both departments are able to communicate via radio, and our accountability systems are identical.

Reese agreed that the departments must train together periodically to ensure that our personnel are familiar with standard operating procedures, equipment, and accountability systems of the other department. When asked if Willow Street would be interested in formulating a written mutual aid agreement, Reese felt that he needed to learn more about written mutual aid agreements before making that decision. The Chief did feel that we should improve our joint training, and that we could discuss formal agreements in the future. He feels that individual agreements would be preferable to regional ones (D. Reese, Personal Communication, December 2, 2006).

Chief Usdin of Lancaster Township Fire Department feels that the informal agreement between our two departments has been working well. The Chief tries to minimize the use of city resources due to the LFD staffing limitations. The LFD does request Lancaster Township for mutual aid after all of our personnel was recalled, especially as coverage for the rest of the city when we are committed at an emergency scene.

Chief Usdin described a written mutual aid agreement that was in place during the 1980's. Task-Force Six was an agreement between Lancaster Township and two other volunteer fire departments. The agreement was working well and Lancaster Township was sending their ladder truck outside their jurisdiction over 300 times a year to the other two municipalities. The Lancaster Township supervisors began to feel that the other two departments were beginning to depend too heavily on the use of the truck and as a result, discontinued the agreement.

For the most part, the LFD and Lancaster Township have interoperable communications, equipment, and accountability systems. Unfortunately, we have not conducted any joint training. Chief Usdin was very open to the idea of conducting training in accountability systems, and Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) training in particular. When asked if Lancaster Township would be interested in developing formal mutual aid agreements Usdin Said, “We should have done this years ago, I would be very interested in writing an agreement” (G. Usdin, Personal Communication, November 29, 2006).

Chief Rick Kane of Eden was unaware of any written agreements in Lancaster County. He described an informal rapid intervention compact with Rhorerstown Fire Department where Rhorerstown’s ladder truck is automatically dispatched to all of Eden’s structure fires to perform RIT duties. Kane agrees that mutual aid efforts between the LFD and Eden have been efficient and effective and that the equipment and communications are interoperable. As with Lancaster Township, the departments have not trained with the accountability systems, or incident command system. It was agreed that the departments should train together at the fire school and work on joint coordination. When asked if Eden would be interested in entering into a mutual aid agreement Kane said, “Absolutely, we should have done this long ago” (R. Kane, personal communication, December 1, 2006).

John Leas is the Fire Service Coordinator for Manheim Township in Lancaster County. Leas oversees three volunteer fire departments: Neffsville, Southern Manheim Township, and Eden fire departments. Leas, was also the former career Fire Chief of Columbia Borough in Lancaster County. Leas was not familiar with any formal mutual aid agreements in Lancaster County, but described an effort in the early 1990’s to form a county-wide written agreement. The Lancaster County Fire Chiefs Association could not find a



consensus on this issue and the proposal died (J. Leas, personal communication, December 12, 2006).

Leas was a career Air Force firefighter prior to coming to Lancaster County. Leas explained that, “most Air Force bases have written mutual aid agreements with their civilian counterparts in neighboring jurisdictions.” These agreements usually cover reimbursement protocol and define who is in command of an incident. Leas described an Air Force aircraft accident where an armed jet crash-landed outside of Air Force property. The civilian Fire Chief insisted that he was in command of the incident and the first arriving Air Force officer disagreed. Military police arrived and explained that the plane had live ammunition and that the accident scene was now government property, or a “National Defense Area.” According to Leas, most military mutual aid agreements address these types of incidents outside of government property. When asked if Leas was interested in a written mutual aid agreement between the City of Lancaster and Manheim Township Leas replied, “I will do my part in making this happen. Let’s start as soon as possible” (J. Leas, personal communication, December 12, 2006).

Lafayette Fire Company has had a mutual aid contract with Lancaster Township for ten years. Lancaster Township is located to the east, and to the west of the city of Lancaster. Both Lancaster Township Fire Department stations are located on the west side of the city. As part of the contract, Lancaster Township pays Lafayette a yearly fee to respond to the east part of Lancaster Township. Lancaster Township also pays a portion of Lafayette’s apparatus purchases. The LFD responds to confirmed structure fires in the east part of Lancaster Township and when requested for other emergencies.

Chief Nolt agreed that the value of formal mutual aid agreements will be in the planning process. The Chief would like to increase joint training and to standardize procedures between the metro departments particularly in the area of rapid intervention teams. He feels that a regional agreement with annexes between the LFD and the surrounding departments would be preferable to individual agreements (R.Nolt, personal communication, December 20, 2006).

The Lancaster Emergency Medical Services Association (LEMSA) is the largest emergency medical service provider in Lancaster County. At one time, LEMSAs had formal mutual aid agreements with other E.M.S. providers in the area, but with consolidations of services, these agreements became obsolete. The Pennsylvania Code addresses many important issues that would be included in a local mutual aid agreement and E.M.A.C. covers LEMSAs when they respond outside of Pennsylvania (A.Gilger, personal communication, December 26, 2006).

The Regional Terrorism Taskforce will also coordinate mass casualty response within the state of Pennsylvania and has formulated memoranda of understanding between the different regions. During Hurricane Katrina LEMSAs sent four paramedics to Louisiana, and Pennsylvania sent a total of 160 paramedics and 60 ambulances. These resources were requested through the EMAC (A.Gilger, personal communication, December 26, 2006).

The Lancaster City Police have a written mutual aid contract in place with the neighboring Manheim Township Police Department. This agreement covers workers' compensation, general and public liability insurance requirements, waivers in claims, and each municipality agrees to be responsible for their own salaries and equipment costs. A Lancaster Police officer has full authority to make arrests for any crime other than a

summary violation of the vehicle code in the other jurisdiction, but must make notifications and complete the required paperwork. The first responding Manheim Township officer becomes the prosecuting officer.

Currently, police radios are not interoperable. Manhiem Township and the other surrounding townships have switched to an 800-megahertz system, and the Lancaster Police are still on low band. The Lancaster police will be switching to the new system in 2007. Communications protocol should be included in the mutual aid agreement. The chain of command is discussed in the agreement, but no mention was made to NIMS. (S.Gatchall, personal communication, December 23, 2006).

The Municipal Police Jurisdiction Act covers Lancaster Police when they respond outside of their jurisdiction. This act allows them to be requested anywhere in the state, but places responsibility for the incident with the authority having jurisdiction. If a state police officer requests help from a municipal police officer, liability, workers compensation, and reimbursement are covered by the state. If a law enforcement agency would be requested beyond Pennsylvania's borders, they would be covered under E.M.A.C. (S.Gatchall, personal communication, December 23, 2006).

The first research question asked, "What are the opinions of Lancaster County fire chief's concerning mutual aid agreement?" The results of the questionnaire were mixed, but all five Fire Chief's interviewed felt that a written agreement with the LFD would be beneficial to their department.

The second research question asks, "How do other public safety disciplines address mutual aid response?" Leas explained that, "military bases normally have written agreements with the neighboring municipality. These agreements cover reimbursements and costs

incurred during joint response. When military aircraft or other government property is involved in an accident, officials may declare the scene a national defense area and assume command of the incident (J. Leas, personal communication, December 12, 2006).”

Lancaster City Police have a mutual aid agreement with the neighboring Manheim Township Police Department. The agreement covers personnel and legal issues and authority to respond in the other jurisdiction. The Municipal Police Jurisdiction Act allows officers to respond throughout the state, but places responsibility on the authority having jurisdiction (S.Gatchell, personal communication, December 23, 2006).

Local emergency medical responders are covered by the Pennsylvania State Code. The code covers liability, credentialing and authority issues. “If the organization is requested to respond to another county or other state, they will be covered by the regional terrorism taskforce or the EMAC (A.Gilger, personal communication, December 26, 2006).”

The third research question asked, “How would formal mutual aid agreements improve emergency response in Lancaster County?” All five Fire Chiefs that were interviewed agreed that increased joint training, standardizing of standard operating procedures, and ensuring interoperability of equipment would improve mutual aid response. Further, Chief Nolt agreed that a regional mutual aid agreement will better prepare Lancaster County for a large scale incident, and help us to assimilate into a regional response (R.Nolt, personal communication, December 20, 2006).

The fourth research question asked, “What form of mutual aid agreement would be compatible with current intrastate and interstate mutual aid agreements. As stated in NFPA 1201, Fire departments shall have written agreements that address personnel, legal issues, and operational standardization. These local agreements should be based on an intrastate

agreement and written in a way that compliments each other and allows the local agreement to expand to a regional one (NFPA, 2000).

### Discussion

The results of the questionnaire indicated that many of the rural Fire Chiefs preferred the current state of informal mutual aid agreements and only 2 of the 34 respondents had a written agreement in place. The reluctance to enter into written agreements may indicate that some Chiefs do not understand the intent of a written agreement. A written agreement does not automatically commit a department to respond to every call when it is requested (Jenaway, 2006). It is also not an admission that they cannot provide an adequate level of service.

The suburban Fire Chiefs that border Lancaster support the formal mutual aid agreement concept. Most county departments currently share mutual aid on a daily basis and realize that mutual aid can help them to increase their staffing levels. Granito (1997), found that mutual aid is not intended for routine incidents and that municipalities have a responsibility to provide adequate protection. Effective local mutual aid could develop into regionalization and consolidation of departments that could help to reduce the county's staffing problems.

The NFPA and other fire service organizations feel that departments must develop formal agreements. NFPA states that mutual aid agreements shall be in writing and shall address standardization in training and operating procedures (NFPA, 2000). As rural fire chiefs become more accustomed to using the NIMS, and realize that local mutual aid

agreements coordinate with agreements at the State and Federal level; I feel that they will be more willing to enter into formal agreements at the local level.

Any jurisdiction may experience a large scale emergency and Lancaster County is no exception. In October 2006, a barricaded gunman shot 10 school students and turned the gun on himself at the Nickel Mines School in Lancaster County. Sixty-nine fire departments from eight counties, emergency medical, law enforcement agencies, and the national media converged on the county (C.Woerth, personal communication, January 2, 2006). The Incident Management Team based in Harrisburg Pennsylvania responded and assisted local officials with the incident command functions of planning, logistics, finance, and public information. Even without formal mutual aid agreements the incident appeared to be well coordinated and seemed to follow NIMS.

One problem that was encountered at the Nickel Mines incident was self-dispatched departments and individuals. This problem was addressed by assigning a State Police representative to the role of staging officer. Every morning this person took an inventory of self-dispatched resources and had them complete the necessary memorandum of understanding paperwork that is required to be included in the incident. Regional as well as statewide agreements must emphasize the need for departments to respond only when requested (R.Nolt, personal communication, December 20, 2006).

It appears that other public safety disciplines are more progressive with formal mutual aid agreements than the Lancaster County fire service has been. The Lancaster police have had a formal agreement with Manheim Township for years (S.Gatchall, Personal Communication, December 23, 2006). Local emergency medical associations are covered under the Pennsylvania state code when responding to other counties and through the EMAC

when responding out of state (A.Gilger, Personal Communication, December 26, 2006). The military and private industries have also formed mutual aid agreements with their neighboring communities.

I feel that the fire service should work to develop mutual aid agreements with other communities that cover not only the fire service, but law enforcement, emergency medical, and public works as well. This will help to develop coordination with all the disciplines when responding to large scale incidents.

I predict that formal mutual aid agreements between the City of Lancaster and the neighboring fire departments will improve emergency response in Lancaster County. Mutual aid agreements force planners to assess risks, pre-plan for emergencies, and inventory resources (Jenaway, 2006). Joint training and planning sessions promote familiarity that will translate to more effective emergency response.

By having effective local mutual aid agreements, Lancaster County will be more prepared to deploy assets to other areas of the state or nation. During hurricane Katrina, states with effective intrastate agreements were able to respond quickly, and states with no formal agreements were disorganized (NEMA, 2006). NIMS has incorporated the mutual aid and incident command systems to improve regional response (Simpson, Davidson 2006). As member departments exercise their mutual aid plans, the use of NIMS will become second nature to the point where multi-jurisdictional response will operate seamlessly.

A local mutual aid agreement should be based on NFPA 1201. This standard recommends that liability issues and operational issues be standardized and practiced on a regular basis (NFPA, 2006). Public officials and legal departments should be consulted when developing mutual aid agreements. This is an opportune time for public officials to

determine how much outside aid they are willing to provide. The local plan should be written as to compliment and integrate interstate and intrastate mutual aid agreements with the local plan. The plan must also be NIMS compliant (IMAS, 2006).

The study results show that Lancaster County Fire Departments currently rely heavily on mutual aid, and that some of these departments are very traditional and resistant to change. The rural departments seem to feel that the current informal agreements are working well and that there is no need to change. The results of the personal interviews indicated that the neighboring suburban fire departments are ready to develop mutual aid agreements and seem to welcome the standardization of equipment and procedures with the LFD.

The benefit of a mutual aid agreement will be an increased familiarity with personnel and equipment; by forcing departments to periodically sit down and conduct planning sessions. The process of conducting personal interviews for this project has been beneficial, because it provided the opportunity for regional fire service leaders to meet and discuss mutual aid.

We found that most of our equipment and accountability systems are compatible and agreed that future equipment purchases should be made with interoperability in mind. The study results show that many departments do not consistently train together. County emergency management should be involved in organizing exercises that reinforce NIMS and mutual aid, and that expand in scope and complexity.

The organizational implications of not entering in mutual aid agreements with our neighboring fire departments will be a continued state of confusion and disorganization when responding to different jurisdictions. At this time we have not conducted any training in the



use of NIMS, accountability systems, or rapid intervention team equipment with the departments that we provide assistance to.

### Recommendations

The results of the research for this project indicate that there are mixed opinions on the subject of formal mutual aid agreements in Lancaster County. The more rural departments appear to favor informal ‘handshake agreements’ but the urban departments have interest in developing written agreements. A county-wide mutual aid agreement may be a worthy goal for the future, but the best approach may be to begin with the metro area around the City of Lancaster.

I recommend that the Lancaster Fire Department, Lancaster Township Fire Department, Lafayette Fire Department, and the three Manheim Township Fire Departments work together to develop a basic mutual aid agreement. This agreement should be based on best practices from other agreements and should cover the use of NIMS, liability, workers compensation, reimbursements, and the other recommended issues in NFPA 1201. The fire service should have public input, especially from elected officials before finalizing the agreement.

The mutual aid agreement is also a good starting point for strategic planning. Discussions on standard operating procedures and equipment interoperability may lead into discussions on taking a more regional approach to the fire service. Some volunteer fire departments are considering the addition of paid staff, and effective mutual aid could lead to the sharing of personnel and equipment, or even consolidation. The new agreement should be compatible with other existing agreements between member municipalities; law

enforcement, emergency medical services, and public works could also be included in mutual aid agreements between the municipalities.

The agreement should be compatible with intra-state and inter-state mutual aid agreements and be exercised on a regular basis. This training will help member fire departments transition between routine mutual aid and large-scale multi-jurisdictional incidents. Once the agreement is enacted, other Lancaster County fire departments may want to be included. We can work with the Lancaster County Fire Chiefs Association to adopt a county-wide agreement. This agreement could have an opt-out clause to ensure that all fire departments are covered once the agreement is enacted. A formal written mutual aid agreement will ensure that member departments will respond together in a more coordinated manner and be better prepared for deployment far from home during a large scale disaster.

## References

- Bachman, E.G. (2006, November) Creating a Regional Foam Cooperative. *Fire Engineering, Vol.159 NO.11*. 93-98.
- Chief, (2006) Press Release from NIMS Integration Center. *FEMA's NIMS Integration Center and IAFC Launch Intrastate Mutual Aid Project*. Retrieved December 8, 2006 from <http://www.chiefsupply.com/grants/release20060303c.asp>
- Cohn, A.D. (2005, Winter) Mutual Aid: Intergovernmental Agreements for Emergency Preparedness and Response. *The Urban Lawyer*, 11, 22, 23, 37, 39, 45-46.
- Granito, J. (1997) Evaluation and Planning of Public Fire Protection. In E.C. Cote (Ed.), *Fire Protection handbook* (pp. 10-35) Quincy, Mass: National Fire Protection Association.
- Hawkins, T.M., Jr., McClees, H. (1988) Emergency Management. In R.J. Coleman & J.A. Granito (Eds.), *Managing Fire Services* (pp. 343-344) Washington DC: International City Management Association.
- IMAS Stakeholders (2006, February) Guide to Mutual Aid Planning. Retrieved December 20, 2006, from <http://www.iafc.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=391>
- Jenaway, W.F., (2006) *Establishing Mutual Aid Agreements in Volunteer and Small Combination Emergency Service Organizations*. Unpublished Manuscript.
- Kanterman, R. (2005, November). MAC-SICS: Industrial Mutual Aid in New Jersey. *Fire Engineering*, 97-98
- Metcalf, B. (2006, April) The Call: National Initiatives Aim to create Interstate & Intrastate Mutual Aid Systems. *Fire Rescue Magazine*, 134, 137, 138.

- Metcalf, B. (2006, December 5). Answer the Call: Interstate & Intrastate Mutual Aid Systems. *International Association of Fire Chiefs*. Retrieved December 5, 2006 from <http://www.iafc.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=383>
- National Emergency Management Association. (2006, September 19). *Emergency Management Assistance Compact*: (After Action report). Retrieved December 5, 2006 From <http://www.emacweb.org/> pp.4-4, 4-11, 4-18, 4-19, 5-6, 5-11
- National Fire Protection Association. (2000). Standard for Developing Fire Protection Service for the Public (NFPA 1201, No. 5-8.1, 5-8.2, 5-8.3). Quincy, MA: Author
- NIMS Integration Center, 2005, October, 24) National emergency Responder Credentialing System. Retrieved December 25, 2006 from [http://www.fema.gov/txt/emergency/nims/credent\\_faq.txt](http://www.fema.gov/txt/emergency/nims/credent_faq.txt)
- Paulsgrove, R. (1997) Fire Department Administration and Operations. In E.C.Cote (Ed.) *Fire Protection Handbook* (pp.10-14) Quincy, Mass: National Fire Protection Association.
- Pearson, K. (2006, April). An Insiders Perspective: How One IMAS pilot State Feels About the Project. *FireRescue Magazine*. 24 Issue 4.
- Simpson, H., Davidson, A. (2006, February 1). Project to Help Build Intrastate Mutual Aid Systems. *International Association of Fire Chiefs*, Retrieved December 5, 2006 From <http://www.iafc.org/displayindustryarticle.cfm?articlenbr=29275>
- Smith, M.L. (2006, April) Interoperability Begins with Relationships. *Firehouse*, ,44

Appendix A: Questionnaire Cover Letter

November 27, 2006

Dear Fire Chief,

My name is Tim Gregg and I am the Chief of the Lancaster Bureau of Fire in Pennsylvania. Enclosed, you will find a survey I am conducting with Lancaster County Fire Chiefs to determine the current practices and opinions on formal mutual aid agreements among Lancaster County fire departments.

This questionnaire will be part of my applied research project that is required in the first year of the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officers Program. The survey will ask for a description of your department and the services provided. It will look at your department's participation in mutual aid and try to gauge your opinions on formal mutual aid agreements. If you do utilize written agreements, the survey will explore the components of your agreement.

Your participation in this survey will also help the Lancaster Bureau of Fire determine if the development of formal mutual aid agreements are beneficial. The survey should take ten to fifteen minutes to complete and will be completely confidential.

I really appreciate your participation in this survey and I would enjoy speaking to you by phone or in person concerning mutual aid or any other fire service topic.

Sincerely,

Chief Timothy M. Gregg  
Lancaster Bureau of Fire

Enclosure

## Appendix B: Mutual Aid Questionnaire

**Questionnaire on Mutual Aid Practices in Lancaster County Pa.***Please answer the following questions describing your fire department:*

1) Name of department \_\_\_\_\_

2) Name of respondent \_\_\_\_\_

3) How many active members does your department have?

_____	_____	_____	_____
10-20	20-30	30-40	40 or more

4) What is the population of your jurisdiction?

_____	_____	_____	_____
Less than 10,000	10,000-20,000	20,000-30,000	more than 30,000

5) Does your department have a piece of specialized apparatus?

Aerial Apparatus	_____
Heavy Rescue	_____
Tanker	_____
Command Vehicle	_____
Lighting Unit	_____
Water Rescue Boat	_____
Other	_____

6) What services does your department provide?

Fire Suppression	_____
E.M.S.	_____
Technical Rescue	_____
Code Enforcement	_____
Arson Investigation	_____
Fire Safety Education	_____
Water Rescue	_____
Building pre-planning	_____
Haz-Mat	_____
Other	_____

***Please describe your department's participation in mutual aid***

7) Our department provides assistance to our neighbors

often	sometimes	never
-------	-----------	-------

8) Our department requests and receives assistance from neighboring departments

often	sometimes	never
-------	-----------	-------

9) We provide the specialized services that are mentioned in question #6 to our neighbors

often	sometimes	never
-------	-----------	-------

10) Our neighbors provide specialized services to us

often	sometimes	never
-------	-----------	-------

11) We are dispatched automatically to box alarms in neighboring jurisdictions

often	sometimes	never
-------	-----------	-------

12) Our neighbors are dispatched automatically to box alarms into our jurisdiction

often	sometimes	never
-------	-----------	-------

13) Our department relies heavily on aid from our neighbors

strongly agree- agree - neutral - disagree - strongly disagree
--

14) Our neighbors rely heavily on our assistance

strongly agree- agree - neutral - disagree - strongly disagree
--

15) Our department routinely conducts training with our neighboring departments

---

strongly agree - agree - neutral - disagree - strongly disagree

16) Our department uses the National Incident Management System N.I.M.S. on every fire call

---

strongly agree - agree - neutral - disagree - strongly disagree

17) Our department utilizes an accountability system that is compatible with our neighbors' accountability system

---

strongly agree - agree - neutral - disagree - strongly disagree

18) Our communications and firefighting equipment are interoperable with our neighbor's equipment

---

strongly agree- agree- neutral- disagree- strongly disagree

19) Our department conducts strategic planning with our neighbors

---

strongly agree - agree - neutral - disagree - strongly disagree

***Please describe the form of mutual aid agreements employed by your department***

20) Our department utilizes \_\_\_\_\_ mutual aid agreements

Informal (handshake) agreements- Formal written agreements-  
other \_\_\_\_\_

***If your department has no formal agreements please answer the following***

21) I feel that written mutual aid agreements would be beneficial to our department

---

strongly agree - agree- neutral- disagree- strongly disagree



22) I feel that mutual aid agreements with individual departments are preferable to regional ones

---

strongly agree – agree – neutral – disagree – strongly disagree

23) I feel that regional mutual aid agreements are preferable to individual ones

---

strongly agree – agree – neutral – disagree – strongly disagree

24) We are satisfied with informal (handshake agreements)

---

strongly agree – agree – neutral – disagree – strongly disagree

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

***If you department has formal written agreements please answer the following:***

25) Is your written mutual aid agreement with an individual department or is it a regional department?

Individual \_\_\_\_\_

Regional \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

26) Does your written agreement cover the following?

Firefighter accountability \_\_\_\_\_

Communications protocol \_\_\_\_\_

Equipment interoperability \_\_\_\_\_

Procedures for requesting Aid \_\_\_\_\_

Procedures for recall \_\_\_\_\_

Workers compensation \_\_\_\_\_

Liability and Indemnity \_\_\_\_\_

Reimbursement and billing procedures \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

27) Our written mutual aid agreements have been beneficial to our department

\_\_\_\_\_  
strongly agree - agree - neutral - disagree - strongly disagree

Why or Why not? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

***COMMENTS:***

Thank you very much for completing this survey. Please return the survey in the self-addressed stamped envelope provided by November \_\_\_\_\_. If you would like the results of this survey, or would like to discuss mutual aid, I would enjoy hearing from you. Please E-mail me at [tgregg@cityoflanasterpa.com](mailto:tgregg@cityoflanasterpa.com) or call the office 291-4866 or cell 989-3662.

Sincerely,

Chief Timothy M. Gregg  
Lancaster Bureau of Fire

Appendix C: Mutual aid interview questions

Mutual Aid Interview Questions

What is your department's history in regards to mutual aid?

What do you know about the county's history with mutual aid?

Do you feel that mutual aid with the City of Lancaster has been efficient and effective?

Do you feel that our equipment is interoperable?

Do you feel that our accountability system is compatible?

Would you be interested in increasing our in-service training?

Are you familiar with Interstate and Intrastate mutual aid agreements?

Would you be interested in developing written mutual aid agreements between your department and the Lancaster Bureau of Fire?

If so, would individual or regional agreements be best?